

wherever he went" ? The peasant of Villingen was not the only man of his class mighty in the Scriptures. In many parts of Germany the peasant and the artisan were ready not only to confront the priest with the demand for reform, but to back up the demand with a text of Scripture. And what if a Luther took to reading the Bible not merely in a translation but in the original ? Traditional authority might appeal to schoolmen and fathers, but to the man who could read Greek and Hebrew the appeal was no longer conclusive.

Next to the psychological, the humanist factors, the Reformation owed not a little to political, social, and economic influences. If these influences played an influential part in the movements inaugurated by Wicklif and Hus, they played a still more important part in that led by Luther and those inspired by him in other lands. The formation of the modern nations made it certain that, sooner or later, national churches would arise to disrupt the universal Church, as these nations had disrupted the universal empire. The national spirit had become restive in Germany, as it had long been restive in France and England under the alien ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the pope. The pope drained the empire of vast sums by a multiplicity of pretexts. Germany was plundered from Rome and for Rome. While the Diet could with difficulty raise a few gulden for national purposes, the golden stream, swelled by the numerous tributaries of pallium money, annats, indulgences, and what not, flowed unceasingly Romewards. And the rapacity of the pope and his creatures exasperated because it affected all classes. The Church had become a mere financial institution for exploitation by foreigners. It was identified with a ruinous thralldom to a foreign power, which grated on the national spirit as well as drained the national wealth. What have we Germans to do with Rome ? was the angry question which men put to themselves, and which Luther was to answer for them. And the scandalous declension of clerical morality was not fitted to increase their long-suffering with a Church whose oppressions seemed to rise in the ratio of its moral degeneracy. Even the disintegration of the empire played into Luther's hands. In the ratio that the empire had become weak, the princes, as we have seen, had grown strong, and the strong prince was to